

Missouri School Improvement Program Third Cycle Q & A's

When will the third cycle of the Missouri School Improvement Program begin? The third cycle of MSIP began during the 2001-2002 school year. Preparation for these reviews began with workshops in the spring of 2000. Draft copies of the Procedures Handbook/District Response to the Standards and Indicators, and the Report Writing Form will be posted on the web by October 2000. A previous draft was distributed at workshops held in April, 2000.

How early should a district begin to prepare for its next MSIP? Preparation for the MSIP should be an on-going process, with much of the preparation based on the school's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. The preparation of the District Response to the standards will normally begin at least one year in advance of the team visit and should be completed two to four weeks prior to the team visit.

What would be a typical time-line for the on-site review?

- Continuously - Evaluate student performance data
- 1-2 years before on-site visit – Staff members attend team member training and serve on an MSIP team
- 1 year before on-site visit – Begin work on the District's Response to the Standards and documentation
- During the year prior to the visit – Administer MSIP Advance Questionnaires, meet with State Supervisor, attend session for districts scheduled for review
- 8 weeks before review – Check team member list with State Supervisor, finalize logistics/review schedule
- 6-7 weeks before review – List of staff to be interviewed sent from DESE, State Supervisor helps develop individual interview schedules
- 2-4 weeks before review – Complete District Response to the Standards and the documentation file
- 2-3 weeks before review – Individual interview schedules sent to State Supervisor, verify all arrangements with State Supervisor

Who completes the Advance Questionnaires? All parents of students in grades K-12, staff members, students in grades 3-12 and members of the board of education are given the opportunity to complete an Advance Questionnaire.

When are the Advance Questionnaires administered? For districts with a fall review the Advance Questionnaires are administered in February, March, and April. For districts with a spring review the administration takes place in September, October, and November. Districts may request for the Advance Questionnaires to be administered early, and in most cases this can be accomplished.

What is the typical schedule for a review? The district and team orientation may occur the evening before the first review day or early in the morning of the first review day. Interviews begin the morning of the first review day and usually conclude by noon on the second scheduled day. Reviews usually extend into a second day or even a third day in very large districts. The Team Leader and the State Supervisor will conduct an exit conference with the school administration after the team consensus session.

What is new for the third cycle in the Resource Standards? The Resource Standards have not changed. However, there will be an expectation that teachers either hold current certification or that applications for certification have been submitted before the MSIP review takes place.

How is the Resource Report developed? The Resource Report is developed by the MSIP Section from information submitted by the district on Core Data. The Resource Report reflects the current year's data. Because the report uses current data it is very important for districts being reviewed in October to submit their Core Data as soon as possible after the last Wednesday in September.

What is new for the third cycle in the Process Standards? The third cycle has 29 Process Standards with 95 indicators compared to 59 standards with 240 indicators in place during the second cycle. A majority of the standards/indicators relate to instruction or instructional support. The primary focus of the third cycle Process Standards is on improving student performance.

Is a self-study still required? A self-study is not required during the third cycle. Instead, the district will be required to complete a District Response to the Standards (DRS) document. The district is required to provide responses only to the indicators marked "Written Response Required". Some districts may also choose to complete a self-study by writing to the indicators marked "Written Response Optional".

What documentation is required for the third cycle of MSIP? The MSIP Procedures Handbook contains, along with the DRS, a list of all required documentation. In addition the district should carefully review the Resource and Performance Reports prepared by the MSIP Section.

How should the documentation file be organized? Many districts use manila file folders, labeled by standard and indicator numbers, and arranged within boxes for their documentation files. It is helpful if each item contained within the file is labeled with the applicable standard and indicator it addresses. Large items such as district audits, budgets, ADA plans, curriculum guides, board policy manuals, board minutes and

compliance plans should be clearly labeled and placed in the team workroom. If the documentation is extensive, the district may note in the documentation file where the records are located (e.g., "Curriculum guides for grades K-12 will be found in the team's workroom). For the documents requested for different standards that are found in a single document (i.e., board policies and procedure manual, board minutes, student or staff handbooks, and other sources) the district can copy and highlight the relevant sections of these documents, or prepare page references to these documents to insert into the appropriate documentation file

What is new in the third cycle in the Performance Standards? All performance data for the Performance Report will come from data the district has submitted to Core Data and from data supplied by CTB McGraw-Hill (CTB) and the American College Test (ACT). The third cycle has increased the Performance Standards by one and the indicators by four. The General Academic Achievement will continue to measure three grade spans of Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) data, and reading will continue to measure third and seventh grade reading performance. The ACT is now a stand-alone measure of Scholastic Preparedness, and Career Preparation supports the A+ concept as it focuses on college preparation and preparation for the world of work. The Career Preparation measures include the percent of time spent in advanced courses, the percent of time students spend in approved vocational courses, college placement rates and vocational placement rates. Educational Persistence will continue to be measured by the percent of students who drop out of school and the percent of students who are in regular daily attendance

Can corrections be made to the performance data used for the third cycle report? During the summer of 2000, districts were given a one-time opportunity to provide corrections to the historical Core Data files in certain areas. The historical data, and any corrections submitted, will be used by MSIP to calculate the district's Annual Performance Report (APR) and the MSIP Performance Report. During the third cycle, districts will only be able to make corrections to their MSIP performance data, for the preceding year. After a district receives its preliminary Annual Performance Report the district will have until November 1 to offer corrections to Core Data submissions for the previous school year. No other corrections to the historical data will be made unless it can be demonstrated that DESE has made an error in recording the data.

What are the sources of the specific performance data used in the Performance Report? The MAP data that is used is provided by CTB through the Assessment Section of DESE. Only MAP data corrections certified by the Assessment Section will be considered. The ACT data is furnished by ACT as they provide the department with the number of district students who score at or above the national average on the ACT each year, and were also enrolled in the district at the time the students took the test. Only data provided by ACT or corrections provided through ACT will be used in the Performance Report, with one exception. If a student failed to provide ACT the name of their high school/district when the test was administered, the district may submit this information to the department. The department will then verify this information and give credit for those students who scored at or above the national average and did not

designate a high school to receive their scores. Advance courses and vocational courses come from Core Data screen 20. Vocational completer/placement data are derived from Core Data screens 26 and 27. Dropout data is derived from Core Data screen 14, attendance data from Core Data screen 14, and GPA data for K-8 districts from Core Data screen 14B.

Does the third cycle provide a more accurate way to determine attendance rates? A district may now submit hours of absence on screen 14 of Core Data. This data will allow MSIP to calculate the percent of attendance as precisely as the computerized attendance reporting programs used by some districts. Districts unable to submit hours of absence to Core Data will have their ADA divided by their January membership to derive the percent of attendance for the attendance calculation. Hours of absence data must be provided for all grade levels and buildings for all five years of analysis in order to be used in the attendance calculation.

What should the district expect following the review? The Preliminary Report will be sent to the district and State Supervisor approximately 4-5 weeks after the review. Within the next week or two the State Supervisor will meet with the superintendent to review the Preliminary Report. The district should send the district response to the Preliminary Report to the MSIP Section within two weeks of the district's receipt of the report. Within 2-4 weeks of submitting the district's response to the Preliminary Report the district will receive their Final Report and State Board Summary from the MSIP Section. The MSIP Section will then present the Summary and Classification recommendation to the State Board of Education. Within approximately three months after the district receives the Final Report, the Administrative Response letter to minor concerns is submitted to the State Supervisor by the district. The district will then incorporate major concerns into the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) within approximately ten months after the review. Annually the State Supervisor will review the district's student performance reports to determine the effectiveness of the district's CSIP. The district will continuously evaluate their CSIP in light of its student performance data, and incorporate changes as needed.

What are the classifications that a school district could receive following the review? The classifications are Accredited, Provisionally Accredited and Unaccredited.

Can a school receive distinction in performance? Each year, the Department will identify school districts that qualify for an Annual Distinction in Performance Award. To qualify for this award, a district must meet all but one of the performance measures and all MAP standards according to the most recent Annual Performance Report.

Can a district request a re-review? Yes, but the guidelines for re-reviews vary according to the accreditation status of the district. Requests for re-reviews are made through the State Supervisor and the MSIP Section of DESE. For a Provisionally Accredited district, DESE will make no more than one re-review visit during the five years between scheduled MSIP reviews. For an Unaccredited district, a re-review will be conducted no earlier than nine months following the State Board action on accreditation,

but no later than eighteen months following such action. An Unaccredited district may request a second re-review if the district is still determined to be unaccredited after its first re-review. The second re-review must be conducted early enough to have State Board action by February 1 of the second year of the "two-year clock". For more information on re-reviews, the district's State Supervisor should be consulted.

What happens if a district is classified Unaccredited? Under state law a school district that is classified Unaccredited has two full years to make the necessary improvements to obtain at least provisional accreditation status. If the standards are not met after two years, the district may be closed (lapsed), restructured, or the state may intervene to run the district on an interim basis by appointing a special administrative board. Students in an Unaccredited district may seek to enroll in a neighboring district, and the district of residence is required to pay tuition and transportation costs for the students who enroll in an accredited school.

Can a district receive a waiver exemption from a MSIP review? Yes, State Board of Education regulations provide four different types of MSIP waivers. These waivers are the A+ School Waiver, MSIP Onsite Review Waiver, Outstanding School Waiver and Hold Harmless Waiver.

How does a district know if it qualifies for a waiver? The Commissioner of Education will notify a district that meets the criteria for one of the waivers.

What can be waived? The district may request that part or all the MSIP Resource and Process standards be waived, except those related to certain legal and regulation requirements. No Performance Standards will be waived

Who should be contacted concerning additional MSIP questions? Contact the Missouri School Improvement Program of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The MSIP telephone number is (573) 751-4426 and its mailing address is P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102. Information may also be found at the following web address: <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/sia/msip/index.html>.